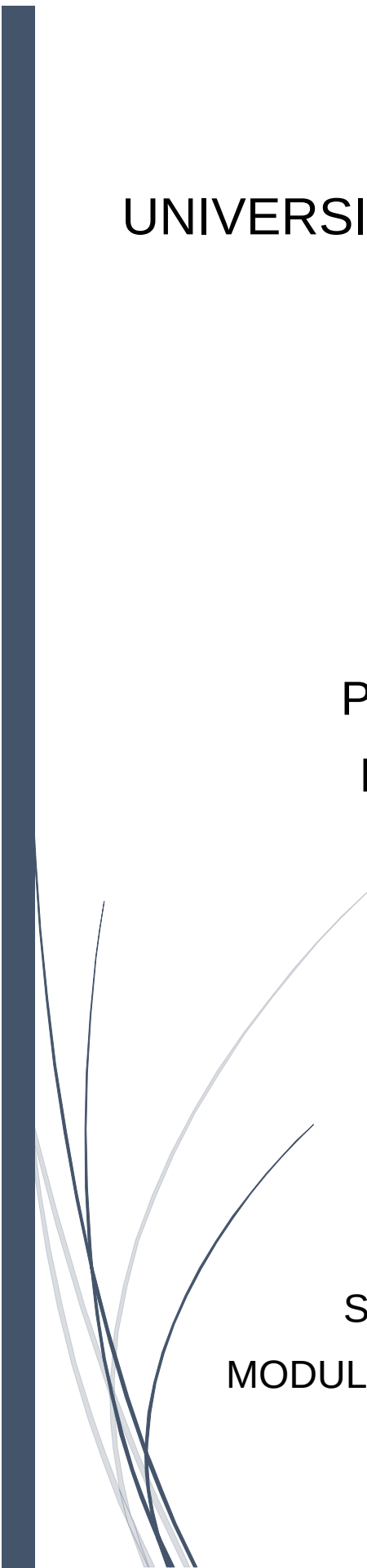


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UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

PROJECT PATHWAYS 2 REFLECTIVE REPORT

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As a university student, it was a compulsory part of my assignment to prepare a proposed business plan as in a group. Though the process of preparing a business plan was very stressful for me, especially because I had to combine it with other academic works. The truth however is that I managed to do it eventually, participating actively in all the groups effort to put up a market plan that's unbeatable. During all this time working with the group, I must confess that quite unconsciously, I got to develop some skills and abilities that are really positively affecting my life. Yes, you read that right, apart from gaining class marks, what started out as a business plan experiment has gone on to build some very important personal and employability skills in my life.

Here are some of the skills that the experience built in me.

As a member of the group, one of the skills I developed overtime while working on the business plan was the problem-solving skill. Amazingly, the ability to solve problems became nurtured in me with time as I attached myself with the rest of the team in working on developing the business plan. Although it was a school work, it looked so real during the time we spent from information gathering to presenting the whole plan. At a point, I became able to just see a problem coming from afar off and building a tactics that will help me tackle the problem successfully.

Over all, I can say my problem-solving skill was sharpened by the whole experience. Part of my role as a member of the team was to find positive ways to solve sudden problems that arose during the whole process. Most of the confidence that I eventually gained came from my ability to fit into the role as a problem solver and doing it just well. What's interesting is that as a result of the days we spent working on all the plan, I can now confidently say that I am in a positive mental state to solve any problem that may come my way during just any task, using the very little resources that may be at my disposal.

This ability toppled every time we devised means to stay on the project together. Naturally, I learnt to work with the team to achieve our common goal. When we started out together working on the plan, most of us didn't know how to function together as a team, but as time went on, we naturally began to blend together, developing a very important skill in the process. Unconsciously, I have personally gained this vital skill and I think that I can blend just into any team now and function well in helping the team achieve set objectives.

During our time working on the various plans, smaller tasks were delegated to all of us, so that we could handle each task individually, but with a focus to integrate each task into the larger group work. While doing this, we discovered that it was easier handling tasks as a group than doing it as individuals. As such, we began to spend more time, handling all tasks as a group. It was during this time that I developed the all important skill. Now, I am proud to say that I can quite easily blend into any formal or informal team without having to struggle too hard to find my bearing.

As a part of the personal ability I got to develop while working with the team, my communication skills were sharpened. Of course you must have known by now that effective communication is only said to have happened when your audience have perfectly encoded your message. Formally, I wasn't very good with communication, but with joining and working with the team on the business plans, I discovered that an ability to get the attention of my audience during communication was sharpened in me. Although slow, I steadily learnt new ways to communicate effectively.

Analyzing data constituted the major role I performed during my time with the team. Especially when it came to my part which was developing aims and objectives of our real estate business plan. I was expected to spend a great deal of time in the library and on the internet to discover information about the real estate business. I also had to get a better understanding of how actual business plans were made. So I would take time off to study more about the subject of making a business plan so that when my group member met for our discussion, I was able to discuss on other part of the plan and not just my part. This was very encouraging to my team leader and to other members as well because they felt we were all contributing to the same goal . Prior to this time, data analysis or anything statistical was never my area of strength. However, our time making series of researches, gathering too many data and eventually getting to analyze them proved to become my breakthrough point in gaining the all important skill of data analysis. Right now, I can say that I'm not just good in analyzing data, but I am now happy doing jobs that are related to data analysis, especially when related to business start-ups. I know it's possible that you're probably wondering how possible it is that I said data analysis is now simple to me. Well, it was a gradual process that led to my near mastery of the skill. Starting out with the projects, sorting and analyzing all the business data and information we got was quite hectic. At a point, I began to get headaches from having to look at numerous amount of figures. However, with time, I realized that I began to get accustomed to seeing and working on all the figures. This meant that my data analysis skill began to positively shoot up in me until it got to a point when I began to enjoy sorting and working with all the data with my team mates.

Apart from all these generic skills that I acquired while making the business plan with the group, I must confess that I had an opportunity to develop many other skills and experiences that are more personal to me. As a way to convince you on how the time we spent working on the plan helped me positively, I will run through some of the self employable skills I've developed overtime with the next few sentences.

Financial Planning

As much as this is a self employment skill, it is also a very personal skill to me. Learning to plan finances for a business can be a vital skill especially when you're starting up a personal business.

Well, with all the researches we did while working on the business plan, I learnt how to personally source for income for business start-up. I equally learnt how to manage

resources and channel them into getting all the works done especially for a personal business. While researching for the funding of all the businesses we used in building our hypothesis, I got an insight into how successful firms planned their finances. In essence, I now understand how to employ this skill, especially to any personal business I will be starting.

Of course under the market analysis and survey section, we analyzed a lot of marketing concepts and market penetration strategies. While these strategies seemed really important to get our business plan document going, it really affected me personally. Yes, it affected me personally in a positive way. I discovered an ability that I didn't know was inborn. A marketing ability. I began to understand how the free market works as a whole and how most major marketing firms manage to beat the several obstacles that may exist. Further more, I understood practically what market leadership is all about, and how to convert all the resources available into a driving ladder to market leadership. Generally, I think that my marketing skill have greatly improved with the time we spent working on the business plan project.

This is an important skill that I got to develop while working with the group. I got to understand how changes in business opportunity can create opportunities or threat for the business, depending entirely on how you can leverage on the situation.

For example, I learnt that the introduction of a new technology can help a business work to reach new customers. I got to learn how the business community is using the PESTEL analysis as a simple tool to analyze the political, economic, sociocultural, and technological in a business environment.

Although I didn't plan out to develop these skills when we started out with the project, it came naturally as I continued in total dedication in the whole business plan development process.

I learnt a lot with this experience and I am looking forward to the next time I will get such an opportunity to learn from engaging in other academic projects.